

The David Nevius House  
([REDACTED] Jacques Voorhees House)  
Jacques Voorhees' Lane, South Middlebush  
Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

HABS-NJ-673

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

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The David Nevius House  
(Alias Jacques Voorhees House)  
Jacques Voorhees' Lane, South Middlebush  
Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey

Owner: Mrs. Henrietta R. M. Manney - alias Helen  
Westley

Occupants: Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Burns

Dates of Erection: Minor unit 1799, major unit about  
1826

Architect: Unknown

Builders: David Nevius (1752-1825) original owner,  
with addition by Jacques J. Voorhees, second  
owner

Present Condition: Well maintained

Number of Stories: One and one-half in older unit, two  
and one-half in later one

Materials of Construction:  
Foundation - stone masonry  
Exterior walls - oak timber frame, brick-filled  
and hand-split white pine shingle covered  
Interior walls - frame studding, plastered  
Chimneys - brick  
Roof - gable, wood shingled

Historical Data:

The identification of this farmhouse by  
discovery of the name of its original owner has been  
found possible by search of the title back from the  
present owner as appears in the public records and is  
reported as follows:

By deed of 7 February 1726/27, Gerret Stoothoff of Flatlands, Kings County, Long Island, New York, conveyed to Petrus Stoothoff of Somerset County, New Jersey, one half of lot No. 4 "at the Raritan," adjoining Jaques and Peter Cortelyou, for 160 Pounds.

Subsequently, by release dated 21 May 1744, Wilhelmus Stoothoff and wife Sara, of Somerset County, conveyed to "their brother and sister Petrus Nevius and Johanna his wife," of same place, one half of the landed estate left by the will of Petrus Stoothoff (abovenamed) to his daughters the said Sara and Johanna.

By an unrecorded deed of 8 May 1749, Wilhelmus Stoothoff of Kings County, Long Island, and his wife Sara, conveyed to David Nevius for 500 Pounds, 150 acres in Somerset County, bounded west by Millstone River, north by Peter Nevius and south by Cornelius Stoothoff\*.

Subsequently, by another unrecorded deed, dated 14 March 1759, this David Nevius of Six Mile Run (he had married on 29 March 1728 Margaret Van Voorhees, widow of Petrus Stoothoff abovenamed) conveyed to said Peter Nevius of Middlebush, both in Somerset County, for 700 Pounds the same 150 acres. Thus, in 1744 and 1759, Peter (Petrus) Nevius assembled the 450 acres homestead farm.(X)

\*The Cornelius Stoothoff farmhouse has been surveyed as NJ-674.

(X) Abstracts of the four deeds as cited here appear in A.V.D. Honeyman, Joannes Nevius and his Descendants, publ. 1900, pp. 536 and 268

By his will dated 7 July 1790 and proved 3 February 1794, Petrus Nevius (a) "of near Middlebush", Franklin Township, Somerset County, New Jersey, devised the use of his farm to his wife Johannah during widowhood, to his eldest son Petrus "the equal half of all the farm and plantation whereon I and my said son Petrus and my son David now live, the southerly side thereof, which half contains about 225 acres\*, as my sons Petrus and David have partly divided and now work it," and to his youngest son David, in similar terms, the northern half thereof, containing likewise about 225 acres as divided, they to pay 150 and 200 pounds respectively to the estate. To his son Martinus he devised the 157 acre farm on which the son then resided. To the three sons and two grandsons, Petrus and Johannes Bogart, he devised 1000 acres in Penryn Township, Gloucester County, New York (now in Vermont) and 1000 acres in Jefferson County, Virginia, divided into four equal parts among them.

(a) Petrus Nevius of Middlebush, N.J., b. 31 July 1718, bapt. 21 Sept. 1718 at New Utrecht, L.I., d. 2 Dec. 1793, mar. before 24 May 1744 Johannah Stoothoff, b. 14 Jan. 1725, d. 28 Jan. 1794, gravestones in Pleasant Plains cem. betw. Middlebush and Franklin Park. He was a farmer and probably removed to Middlebush at the time of his marriage in or before 1744, his wife's parents residing in that vicinity. He owned 150 a. per the tax list of Franklin Twp. 1745. His homestead farm of 450 a. lay between Middlebush and Six Mile Run, his residence in his later years being near the present (1900) home of Henry Van Doren. "He was an austere old gentleman and I have heard our grandfather, who remembered him very well, say that his presence was truly awe inspiring. Following the custom of the early Holland immigrants, he always asked a blessing at table with his hat on." Issue: Peter P. 1749-1815, Martin 1751-1820, Wilhelmina ca. 1756-bef. 1790, David 1758-1825 of whom further. (A.V.D. Honeyman, Joannes Nevius.....and his Descendants, 1900, p. 536).

David Nevius (b) youngest of the three sons of Petrus and Johannah (Stoothoff) Nevius and devisee of the northern half of the paternal homestead in 1790 as abovesaid, held the same at that date and resided thereon at the time of his death in 1825. Evidently as youngest son, his northern half

(b) David Nevius of Pleasant Plains, near Six Mile Run, b. 2 June 1758, bapt. 18 June 1758 in the Dutch Ch. at the latter place, d. 12 Mar. 1825, having mar. 4 Nov. 1781 Elizabeth Schureman, b. 2 Aug. 1761, d. 15 Sept. 1831. "David Nevius resided on a farm of 150 acres left him by his father, Petrus. It extended from the road leading from Middlebush to Six Mile Run to the Millstone River, being the northerly part of his father's 450 acre tract." He was commissioned Lieut. of 2nd Co. 5th Battalion 3d. Regt. Somerset Militia 1793, and Capt. 1798, Justice of the Peace 1799, 1812 etc., and Capt. 1798, Justice of the Peace 1799, 1812 etc., and had served in the Revolutionary War as an express rider. According to his own bible, the following occurred in 1799: "In the night between the 16 and 17 of February we were awakened by a manifest providence over our lives and heard a snapping of fire. I got up and opened the door and found the outside of our house in a light blaze and with difficulty got our children out with a few pieces of furniture; the rest with our clothing and provisions were consumed to ashes. This happened in 1799 at half after 1 o'clock at night." By an unrecorded deed of 1 May 1794 Peter P. Nevius conveyed (or quitclaimed) to his brother David, the 225 acre share devised to the latter by their father as the two brothers had divided the farm, describing this part as bounded north by land of said David Nevius and Jaques Voorhees, East by Middlebush Road, south by Peter Nevius and west by Millstone River. (Honeyman cited above p. 269).

\* Peter P. Nevius of Six Mile Run (Franklin Park) N.J., b. 2 June 1749 probably at Middlebush, son of Petrus and Johannah (Stoothoff) Nevius, d. 2 June 1815, having mar. 30 Oct. 1771 Jane Stoothoff, b. 15 Nov. 1753, d. 1 Nov. 1825 at Ovid, N.Y. He was a farmer and owned the farm subsequently owned by his newpew Peter S. Nevius and later by Isaac I. Voorhees, at Pleasant Plains with the boundaries of the Six Mile Run district. (Honeyman, cited above, p. 546).

of the paternal farm did not include the house, and so he built thereon his own house, the one which was burned down in 1799 and rebuilt thereafter. That last construction appears to remain as the obviously older part of the house here considered. In his will dated 27 October 1821 and proved 19 April 1825, this David Nevius of Franklin Township, Somerset County, N.J., gave full power to his executors, Peter S. Nevius and James S. Nevius, to sell and convey any or all of his real estate "as to them may be thought necessary and expedient."

Accordingly, by deed of 1st May 1826, the executors conveyed to Jacques J. Voorhees, likewise of Franklin Township, the 235 acre farm late of David Nevius deceased, describing it as having a frontage of 1677 feet on the northwest side of the road from Middlebush to Ten Mile Run, and extending some 7500 feet northwest to the Millstone River, bounded southwest by the land of Peter S. Nevius and northeast by the road leading from the Middlebush Road to Griggstown, with all and singular the buildings, improvements, etc.

In a deed of division of the real estate of this Jacques J. Voorhees of Somerset County, dated 27 January 1842, the farm acquired as above was cut into a row of 6 lots, each extending the width of the tract. The second of these from the Middlebush highroad, the one bounded southeast by Voorhees Brook and on which stands the house here surveyed, was allotted to his son Jacques Voorhees, containing some 77 acres, as also the fifth lot, one of 13 acres fronting on the Delaware and Raritan Canal which cut off the river front upper end of the farm in 1834. This Jacques Voorhees Sr. purchased the intervening third and fourth lots from F.U.L. Voorhees to whom they had been allotted.

By deed of 14 March 1890, the two executors of the estate of Jacques Voorhees Sr., deceased, conveyed to John A. Voorhees of South Middlebush the same 4 lots as one tract of 143 $\frac{1}{2}$  acres, and he in turn passed it by deed of 22 March next to his brother Abram S. Voorhees, (being sons of John V. Voorhees) who conveyed it to John Unseld, John Bonish and Conrad Unseld,

all of New York City, by his deed of 20 May 1920. The first named of these grantees conveyed the farm to the second by deed of 22 August 1921, and Therese Bonish, his heir, sold the eastern 52 acres thereof to Henrietta Remsen Meserole Manney\* of New York City by deed of 2 July 1934. The last named remains as owner at the time of our survey of the house in September 1940, and her son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Burns, as occupants.

Reference:

Search of title in Somerset County land and probate records by William Brown, H.A.B.S. abstractor, reported 28 November 1940.

\* Professionally, Helen Westley, the well-known stage and screen actress, a member of the Board of The Theatre Guild, N.Y.C.

*Lucius D. Cook*

Supervising Historian

Approved:

*Seymour Williams*

SEYMOUR WILLIAMS, F.A.I.A.  
District Officer